

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing services to an Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a network of workstations at the Intermediate Care Facility;
- b. connecting workstations on said network to a remote central server;
- c. connecting one or more vendors to said central server; and
- d. providing said workstations at the Intermediate Care Facility with access to only ones of said one or more vendors approved by said Intermediate Care Facility.

2. The method of claim 1 in which said network is a wireless network.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of providing a purchase order from said ICF to one or more of said vendors approved by said ICF.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of tracking vendor performance on each purchase order.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of providing reports to said ICF on vendor performance.

6. A method of upgrading information process capability at Intermediate Care Facilities, comprising the steps of:

- a. providing workstations at an Intermediate Care Facility;

- b. connecting said workstations to a network hub;
- c. connecting said network hub to a central applications service provider.

7. The method of claim 6 in which said network hub is a wireless hub.

8. The method of claim 6 in which the applications service provider provides at least one application from the set of applications consisting of: Vendor Compliance Software, Electronic Procurement Software, Clinical Compliance Software, Clinical Assessment Software, Mobile Connectivity Software, Clinical Trials Software, Census Enhancement Software, MDS Manager Software, Physician Order Software.

9. The method of claim 8 in which the applications service provider further provides at least one application from the set of applications consisting of: Billing Software, Inventory Management Software, Accounts Payable Software, Accounts Receivable Software, Billing Software and Accounting and Financial Software.

10. A method of upgrading information processing capability at Intermediate Care Facilities, comprising the steps of:

- a. providing workstations at an Intermediate Care Facility;
- b. connecting said workstations to a central applications service provider that provides integrated clinical and procurement applications for the Intermediate Care Facility.

11. The method of claim 10 in which the applications service provider provides at least one application from the set of applications consisting of: Vendor Compliance Software, Electronic Procurement Software, Clinical Compliance Software, Clinical Assessment Software, Mobile Connectivity Software, Clinical Trials Software, Census Enhancement Software, MDS Manager Software, Physician Order Software.

12. The method of claim 10 in which the Intermediate Care Facility may select from a set of clinical and procurement applications and pay a fee based on the number and/or type of applications selected.

13. The method of claim 12 in which the fee is due periodically.

14. A server for connection to at least one Intermediate Care Facility, comprising:

- a. a storage area network;
- b. a plurality of application servers operating in a load sharing mode;
- c. a network interface; and
- d. a rules engine for processing information provided by one or more applications.

15. The server of claim 14 in which said rules engine drives one or more of said applications.

16. The server of claim 14 in which said rules engine links data and functions of one or more applications.

17. The server of claim 14 in which said rules engine comprises rules of a rules hierarchy in which rules inherit properties from other rules higher in the hierarchy.

18. The server of claim 14 in which said rules engine comprises rules having a scope of application that applies to an enterprise or subdivision of an enterprise, to facilities and to institutions.

19. The server of claim 14 adapted to be connected to one or more suppliers of goods or services.

20. The server of claim 14 in which said applications include one or more applications from the set of applications consisting of: Vendor Compliance Software, Electronic Procurement Software, Clinical Compliance Software, Clinical Assessment Software, Mobile Connectivity Software, Clinical Trials Software, Census Enhancement Software, Resident Scheduling, MDS Manager Software, Physician Order Software.

21. A method of processing information for use with clinical trials, comprising the steps of:

- a. removing patient identifying information from a Minimum Data Set file to produce a revised file;
- b. storing information from the revised file in a database; and
- c. retrieving information from said database in response to a user query.

22. The method of claim 21 in which said user query is directed to identifying organizations having candidates for participation in a clinical trial.

23. The method of claim 21 in which said user query is directed to identifying organizations having candidates using a particular product or service.

24. A workstation for connection to a central server of an application service provider, said workstation comprising: a hidden copy of data and instructions comprising at least a portion of an application provided by said central server whereby said workstation can continue to provide functionality to users when a communication link to said central server is not operational.